

Message Text

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65

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIE-00

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O R 031900Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 542

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU, HI

COMUS JAPAN, YOKOTA AB

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 7254

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVI, PFOR, JA

SUBJ: FORMER PRIME MINISTER SATO'S POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REF: TOKYO 7252 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: A STAUNCH FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES, FORMER PRIME MINISTER SATO'S ACHIEVEMENTS WERE MANY, MOST NOTABLY RYUKYU ISLANDS'S 1972 REVERSION TO JAPAN. HIS TIES WITH POWERFUL LDP FACTION LEADERS TAKEO FUKUDA AND KAKUEI TANAKA REMAINED CLOSE UNTIL THE TIME OF HIS DEATH. NONETHELESS, WE SUSPECT THE IMPACT OF SATO'S PASSING ON THE LDP WILL BE MODEST--NEITHER HELPING OR HINDERING PRIME MINISTER MIKI. END SUMMARY.

1. EISAKU SATO SERVED AS PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN FROM NOVEMBER 1964 TO DECEMBER 1972, LONGER THAN ANY OTHER
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POST-WAR PRIME MINISTER. HIS OLDER BROTHER, NOBUSUKE

KISHI, WAS PRIME MINISTER FROM 1957 TO 1960. A FORMER MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS EMPLOYEE, SATO WAS PROTEGE OF PRIME MINISTER SHIGERU YOSHIDA, WHO APPOINTED HIM CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY IN 1948. HE WAS ELECTED TO DIET FOLLOWING YEAR AND, DISPLAYING OUTSTANDING SKILL IN HANDLING PARTY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS, ROSE RAPIDLY IN CONSERVATIVE POLITICS. HE SERVED IN SEVERAL CABINETS BEFORE BECOMING PRIME MINISTER.

2. DURING SATO'S TERM AS PRIME MINISTER, JAPAN EXPERIENCED REMARKABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NATION'S GNP BECAME THIRD LARGEST IN WORLD. HIS IMPORTANT ACHEIVEMENTS IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS INCLUDED 1965 JAPANESE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ROK, REVERSION OF BONIN ISLANDS TO JAPAN IN 1968 AND NEGOTIATION OF REVERSION OF RYUKYU ISLANDS TO JAPAN IN 1972 -- WHICH HE CONSIDERED CAPSTONE OF HIS SERVICE AS PRIME MINISTER.

3. IN 1970, DURING SATO ADMINISTRATION GOJ SIGNED NNPT. SATO ALSO AUTHORED JAPAN'S "THREE NON-NUCLEAR PRINCIPLES"-- NOT TO POSSESS, MANUFACTURE OR PERMIT INTRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HIS IDENTIFICATION WITH THESE DEVELOPMENTS WERE FACTORS WHICH LED TO AWARD OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE TO HIM IN 1974. STAUNCH FRIEND OF US, SATO DISPLAYED CONSISTENT SUPPORT FOR MAINTENANCE OF CLOSE SECURITY AND ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN US AND JAPAN.

4. WHILE SATO HAD CONTINUED TO WIELD CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE IN LDP AFFAIRS AS ELDER STATESMAN, OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION IS THAT HIS DEATH WILL HAVE ONLY MODEST IMPACT ON LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND ITS LEADERSHIP. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TAKEO FUKUDA WILL PROBABLY BE MOST INFLUENCED, AS HE WAS CLOSE TO SATO AND TO SOME EXTENT LOOKED TO HIM FOR ADVICE, FOR LINK TO BUSINESS-FINANCIAL COMMUNITY, AND FOR SUPPORT IN INTRA-PARTY MANEUVERING. SATO ALSO REPORTEDLY SERVED AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN FUKUDA AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER KAKUEI TANAKA, A LONG TIME TRUSTED SATO LIEUTENANT. OVERALL, HOWEVER, WE ANTICIPATE SATO'S DEATH WILL HAVE ALMOST NO IMPACT ON PARTY POWER STRUCTURE, WILL NEITHER HELP NOR HINDER PRIME MINISTER MIKI, AND CERTAINLY WILL

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NOT INFLUENCE BASIC POLICY ORIENTATION EITHER OF LDP OR GOVERNMENT.
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